

Khalsa Secondary Academy

Hollybush Hill, Pioneer House, Stoke Poges, SL2 4QP

Inspection dates

24–25 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders' and governors' ambition to secure teaching and achievement that is consistently good or better is not fully realised.
- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and students' achievement are not always accurate enough. Leaders and governors believe teaching and achievement to be stronger than they are.
- Students' achievement varies between subjects and year groups.
- More able students are not consistently making good progress.
- Some teachers do not plan lessons with suitable challenge for students of varying abilities and particularly the more able.
- Not all teachers are skilful enough at questioning the class to check whether all understand the lesson or if a different approach or further explanation is needed. As a result, students do not always make enough progress.
- Teachers do not always teach students the exact skills needed to tackle the tasks set for them.
- At times, teachers' intentions for what students should learn are not precise enough. Students are expected to focus on too many things at once, rather than mastering specific skills and knowledge.
- Teachers' assessment of students' work is not always accurate. Teachers' written advice is not always specific enough. As a result, students do not always know what their next steps in learning should be.
- Students usually display positive attitudes to learning. However, where teaching is less effective, students sometimes do not pay attention and learning time is lost.
- The academy's work to keep students safe needs improvement. Leaders do not always maintain rigorous enough records of the actions taken and support provided for students who are at risk of harm.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching in English is strong. Most students make excellent progress in their English lessons and over time.
- Leaders are making effective use of pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged students make strong progress and are catching up with their peers. Work to improve their attendance has been successful. It has improved notably during the last year.
- The actions of leaders to improve student's literacy skills are effective.
- Students study a broad range of subjects at Key Stage 3 and have a suitable range of academic and practical courses to choose from at Key Stage 4.
- The academy's work to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Students are increasingly well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Students' behaviour around the academy is exemplary. They are polite and welcoming. They know how to keep themselves and each other safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 16 lessons, seven jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors looked separately at samples of students’ English, mathematics, history and science work provided by the academy.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, teachers and groups of students.
- Inspectors reviewed documents, including safety procedures, behaviour and attendance records, self-evaluation and planning documents and the academy’s records on performance management and teaching and learning.
- Inspectors took into account the 26 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 17 questionnaires completed by staff. The lead inspector met with four parents during the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Diana Choulerton, Lead inspector
Jason Ashley

Her Majesty’s Inspector
Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy was established by the Slough Sikh Education Trust. It opened as an academy free school in September 2013.
- The academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Currently most students are in Years 7 and 8, with a smaller number in Year 9. When full, the academy will be a little smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are of Indian ethnicity. Almost half the students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for children who are looked after by the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals) is low.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is much lower than the national average.
- The academy does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The academy has not yet had any students in Key Stage 4. Therefore, the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress, do not apply.
- When the academy opened with a teaching staff of six, the Principal was the only senior leader. Two teachers left at the end of the first year. Six full-time teachers and five part-time teachers joined the academy in September 2014. Two full-time teachers have since left. One teacher is leaving this summer. Two subject leaders were promoted to newly created assistant principal posts early in 2015. A further assistant principal joined the school in April. The academy will have a full complement of staff for the start of the autumn term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so all students, and particularly the most able, consistently make good progress, ensuring that:
 - teachers always set work at the right level of challenge for students of different abilities
 - all teachers make skilful use of questioning to engage everyone's interest during whole-class discussions and ensure that all understand the lesson and are learning well
 - teachers clearly teach students the skills they need to successfully tackle the task set for them
 - teachers plan lessons that focus sharply on helping students master specific skills and knowledge
 - when teachers' assess students' work it is done with consistent accuracy
 - teachers' feedback to students is routinely specific about what the students have achieved and what needs to improve.
- Ensure that leaders' evaluations of teaching and students' achievement are accurate, so leaders, governors and teachers know what needs to improve and take action.
- Make sure that leaders keep precise records of actions taken to keep students at risk of harm safe, so those with responsibility for safeguarding can be satisfied that actions taken are always sufficient.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership capacity to secure good and better teaching has not proved to be sufficient. Until recently, the Principal was the only senior leader in the academy. She has only recently appointed a senior team to work with her. Changes in teaching staff and some difficulties in recruitment have presented a further challenge.
- Leaders have an over-generous view of the standards of teaching and achievement. They have suitable approaches to checking the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Leaders regularly visit lessons, scrutinise students' work and consider information about students' progress. However, senior and middle leaders have not evaluated the information they collect accurately enough. As a result, they believe teaching and achievement to be stronger than they are.
- The ethos of the academy is one of tolerance and respect for all. Staff and students do not accept discrimination of any kind. Relationships are consistently positive. Activities, including assemblies and discussions in learning for life lessons, contribute well to students' understanding of equality issues.
- Leaders show clear commitment to ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve well. They keep a close eye on all students' progress. Senior and middle leaders meet regularly as an academic review board to identify any student who is falling behind and plan support to help them catch up. This is generally a well-considered and effective approach. However, leaders have not paid enough attention to ensuring more able students who need support to make good progress receive this.
- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. Extra support, such as that from a specialist teacher in English lessons and catch-up sessions in English and mathematics, is effective. Consequently, disadvantaged students who have fallen behind catch up and make further good progress.
- Leaders have not made sure that the academy's record keeping for cases where students are at risk of harm is always as well organised as it needs to be. Other aspects of safeguarding work are sound. Recruitment processes are rigorous. All staff receive suitable up-to-date training. They know how to identify risks and who to raise concerns with when needed.
- The academy's curriculum is broad and balanced. Students study a suitable range of subjects. Enrichment sessions, three times a week, enable students to take part in archery, horse-riding, drama, music, chess and debating. Students in Years 8 and 9 will start studying GCSEs in September 2015. All students will study the English baccalaureate and other subjects of their choice, including practical subjects. All will do physical education and attend learning for life lessons and study religious education.
- Leaders have made sure that students are developing an understanding of the variety of careers they could follow. People from different professions and industries regularly visit the academy to talk to students. Leaders have suitable plans to make use of a trained careers adviser to support students in deciding about possible future careers and their next steps when they leave school.
- The academy's work to promote students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is strong. It helps prepare students well for life in modern Britain. Students are developing their understanding of democracy and the rule of law through setting up an academy parliament. The academy's recently elected prime minister is appointing her cabinet. A visit from the police also contributed well to this. Students involve themselves in the wider community through activities such as attending the village Remembrance Day service and collecting money for a food bank for the homeless. Most Year 9 students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, which helps them develop their team working skills.
- Sikh assemblies provide students with the opportunity for reflection, quiet thought and prayer. Students learn about other faiths and cultures in religious education lessons, visits to places of worship, including a local synagogue, and events such as Diwali, Ramadan and Christmas. The academy celebrated Guru Nanak's birthday as a peace and interfaith day.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious for the students of the academy. They receive regular information from leaders about all aspects of the academy's performance, including teaching, achievement and behaviour. They challenge leaders about any aspect they understand to need improvement. However, they have not done enough to check that leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate. As a result, they have not held leaders to account well enough for the quality of teaching and achievement.
 - Governors have a well-developed understanding of their role in ensuring safeguarding procedures are secure. A governor trained in safer recruitment suitably involves herself in all staff appointments. Governors have made sure that policies meet requirements and that staff are suitably trained. However, they were not aware that leaders are not always tightly following the academy's safeguarding policy with regard to record keeping.

- Governors are fully involved in final decisions about judging teachers' performance and making sure that pay increases are only awarded for good performance. However, in order to ensure they only approve pay for good performance, governors will need to make sure the information used to judge teachers' performance is accurate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students' behaviour around the site is exemplary. They are kind and polite to each other and visitors. They go out of their way to make sure that people feel welcome. Students who join the academy from elsewhere talked to the inspectors about how much happier they now feel.
- Students show clear commitment to ensuring they treat everybody equally. They are tolerant and understanding of difference. Teasing and name-calling are rare; students are clear that behaviour of this kind is not acceptable.
- Students typically conduct themselves well in lessons. Incidents of low-level disruption are unusual. Students come equipped to work and are usually quick to follow teachers' instructions. However, sometimes when teaching does not engage their interest, students do not take responsibility for their own learning. When this occurs, students pay little attention when their teacher is explaining or when classmates are reading to the class. Sometimes they also fail to seek help when they need it.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. The senior leader responsible for safeguarding does not always keep rigorous enough records of the actions taken and support provided for students who are at risk of harm. The academy is not as well placed as it needs to be to ensure that any concerns about a student's safety are dealt with effectively. Information is not kept together in one place. It is not always easy to find when needed.
- Students say they feel safe at the academy. They know that bullying of any type is unacceptable. Incidents of bullying are rare. Students know whom to turn to if it does occur. They are confident it would be resolved. Students learn about how to keep themselves safe in the wider world and online in their learning for life lessons.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good. Some students, and particularly the most able, do not always make the progress they could in mathematics, science and a few other lessons.
- Some teachers do not consider students' previous achievement well enough when they plan lessons. They expect all students to do the same task regardless of their ability. Students spend time doing tasks that are too easy or hard and do not make the progress they could. On occasion, the aims of a lesson are too vague or broad. Students have to consider too much at once at the expense of honing specific skills and deepening understanding. A few teachers do not explicitly teach students the skills needed to complete the task. The progress that students make reduces when they are unclear about how to approach the work set for them.
- Not all teachers are skilful enough at checking that all the class understand the lesson. Sometimes these teachers hold discussions intended for the whole class but only some students join in. In such cases, the teacher does not do enough to draw other students into the discussion, to see if they too understand the work or to help them deepen their knowledge. As a result, the teacher does not always know how well students are learning or when they need a different approach. Consequently, some students stop paying attention and learning time is lost.
- Teachers' marking is not consistently helpful. Teachers follow the academy's marking policy. They provide written suggestions for students on how to improve. Students have time in lessons to act on this. Increasingly this approach is helping students to improve. However, the quality and precision of the advice is variable. Some teachers write comments such as 'be independent in learning' or 'complete homework on time', rather than giving precise subject-specific advice. On occasions, when students do respond to helpful advice, the teacher does not check this or note the improvement.
- Teacher's assessment of students' work is not always accurate. The inspector who examined students' books found work of the same standard awarded different levels. One student was judged to have progressed to the next level even though he was still making many basic mistakes. As a result, students

do not always have an accurate understanding of what they are good at and what they need to improve.

- Teaching in English is strong. Students are keen to take part in discussion and know what they need to do to improve. In this subject teachers mark students' work accurately and provide helpful and detailed advice to students about how to improve further. Students then amend and rework their writing. This helps them to make good progress. However, there are times when the most able learners could be challenged more.
- Reading is taught well across the academy. The academy uses a reading programme which tests students' reading ages. Students are then given a list of books to choose from, designed to stretch their reading ability by just the right amount. Every lesson starts with five minutes of silent reading. Students' reading ages are improving quickly.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students do not always make good progress in lessons. Not all teachers are skilled enough in planning and teaching lessons in which all students, particularly the most able, can learn consistently well. As a result, achievement varies between subjects and year groups. Students typically make strong progress in English lessons and varying progress in mathematics and science. Students' progress in most other subjects is good or better.
- The academy's assessment information shows that the proportions of students on track to make better than expected progress in Year 9 in mathematics are below those seen nationally. On average, Year 9 students have made better progress this year. Nevertheless, they have still not caught up from previous underachievement. Too few students in Year 8 are making more than expected progress in science.
- The proportions of students in Years 8 and 9 on track to make expected progress in mathematics is low in comparison to Indian students nationally. It is also low in English in Year 8. Students who speak English as an additional language typically make good progress.
- The most able students are not making enough progress in some subjects and year groups. Not enough most able students in Year 8 are making good progress in mathematics or English. The proportion of students making good progress in science is low in Year 8 and a little low in Year 7.
- Disadvantaged students typically make good progress from their starting points. They are catching up with their peers. The proportions currently on track to make good progress by the end of Key Stage 4 are above those seen nationally. If disadvantaged students maintain their current rate of progress through the rest of Key Stages 3 and 4, their mathematics and English GCSE results should be in line with those of other students nationally.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs typically make good progress from their starting points. Leaders make sure they get the support needed to learn well. The coordinator for special educational needs (SENCo) has provided teachers with helpful information about the best ways to help students with special educational needs to learn in class. The SENCo, head of mathematics and English run regular after-school session with these students to help them to catch up.
- There is no nationally published data about students' performance. This is because to date, the academy has not had students at Key Stage 4. Leaders are yet to decide the academy's entry policy for GCSE.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139897
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	450167

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Singh Kandola
Headteacher	Rose Codling
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	01753662009
Fax number	N/A
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